



Executive Principal – Introduction letter

31st March 2021



Dear Parents,

I am delighted to be joining Nada International School (NIS) as the Executive Principal after the departure and retirement of Mr. Tony Fynn, I wish him well in his new endeavors. I want to reassure you that the school has been in good shape with the existing leadership and I am confident my appointment will bring further experience and strengths that will see NIS continue to provide the best education possible for your children. I finally made it out of quarantine on Monday and am now active in the school, getting to know everyone.

I intend to continue the good work already undertaken at NIS and develop the existing provision so that it has a world class curriculum, quality teaching and learning, broad learning experiences both within and outside the classroom. A priority within the current climate is that learners are safe whilst online and know how to make best use of the digital world to maximise their learning. With this in mind you should see two changes being implemented from Sunday 4th April, which I believe are essential changes to make to the current educational provision, in addition to a change to communication processes within the school.

- i. From Sunday all lessons will be live for every lesson allocated on your child's timetable. Staff may still post resources in Show My Homework, but the expectation is that teachers deliver lessons and support your children with their learning. This includes laying out clear learning objectives, engaging learners in starter activities, providing meaningful learning content which students are supported with and learning reviewed with a summary or plenary.
- ii. I have now asked all teachers to be the first point of contact with you as a parent, initially by email if your child is having some difficulties, is missing work or has not been present at a lesson. Please respond directly to them in these instances and support your child if any direct intervention is needed at home. If the situation is not addressed or continues colleagues have now been asked to then follow up with a phone call to you. Only after these actions should any issues be escalated further to supervisors, coordinators or Principals. Furthermore, I have also emphasized the need for positive recognition where learners have been seen to have made changes.

With time I will further look to further develop students learning skills and competencies to enable them to be motivated, happy learners who are socially and academically successful. Beyond this I will continue to look to improve ways of communicating, organizing the learning, developing infrastructure and opportunities for your children along with the support of all members of the school community.

I am excited to be taking on this role and I bring a wealth of International school leadership experience including Principal, Head of School, Deputy Principal from both British and International schools. I have had the privilege of working at outstanding A - Level / IGCSE / National Curriculum and International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum schools in Abu Dhabi, Kenya, UK and previous experience in Saudi Arabia.

Like many of the families at NIS, I consider myself to be a global citizen, but an Irish national. I have lived in several countries whilst growing up including parts of Africa, the Middle East and have an International Education background as a student, as well as attending school and University in the UK. I graduated from Exeter University and completed my Master's degree in 'Educational Leadership' with the University of Bath.

As a qualified school inspector (PENTA) and Principal Leadership (PTC) I have a wealth of school improvement experience for both distance learning and in person teaching and learning. Furthermore, having recently worked in the UAE, which is highly regulated, I have implemented various stringent measures for stages of reopening schools with safety procedures, so will ensure your child is safe when they return to school. We all have a strong determination for things to return to normal and schools to fully reopen. To do this we all need to continue to follow the guidance of socially distancing, sanitization and wearing face masks, but should also commit to vaccination, which I have now done and encourage others to do so.

For our grade 10 – 12 parents many of you will have heard the announcement that CAIE has now finally announced the cancellation of examinations. I believe this is the correct decision under the current circumstances and I want to reassure you we have already started actioning the necessary steps to ensure your son / daughter gets the best possible, realistic grade that they deserve. This will ultimately involve a combination of information including previous assessments, mock results, teacher formative assessments and professional judgements based on their continued level of work, and not solely mock results. For some students this will entail continuing to attend the already assigned lessons so we can strengthen the evidence base we will submit to CAIE.

Moving back to a little bit about myself, I have a variety of interests outside of school mainly involving health and fitness, participating in watersports during the holidays / weekends, watching a variety of sports, music, Indian food and travel are my biggest interests or passions outside of education. I met my wife (Qui) whilst working in Kenya and once all of the usual visa processes are completed, she will join me in KSA at a later point. She has worked in schools as a support assistant in specialist subject areas including Art and Primary Foundation stage. My wife has a passion for animal welfare and is committed to charity work in this area.

Support, encouragement and the concern for the welfare of others is a characteristic I promote and support in education. The importance of giving back and supporting others has never been so important as it is today, continuing to live with a global pandemic. Despite these challenges I believe we can make a real difference to the future through education, by developing young minds and future leaders. I am an advocate for developing an awareness of sustainability and having a positive impact on the global environment. I believe all students have the ability to succeed and should be supported and inspired to fulfil their dreams.

Global events over the last year have highlighted the need for us as a community to develop future leaders who have a strong moral compass, can distinguish between what is true or fake and to look for new and innovative ways of doing things. I am committed to developing students' awareness and appreciation of the NIS values, quality, respect, discipline, honesty, creativity and excellence. I will endeavor to develop these values in your children, through rich learning experiences promoting the development of essential learning skills such as leadership, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, creativity and innovation.

As a leader of education, I want to reassure you that I put the students learning and wellbeing as my main priority. This is an incredibly challenging time with the global pandemic having an impact on the way our lives are shaped and how education is delivered. It is a priority that children continue to learn and that they are safe whilst doing so, particularly whilst learning online. Furthermore, every learning experience should encourage and promote students to have an understanding of what it means to be responsible digital citizens.

I have worked extensively with teachers and other school leaders in my previous school to ensure the quality of distance learning is of the highest standard, catering to the needs of all learners. In my previous school in the UAE the authorities inspect schools' provision of distance learning and ours was rated in the highest performing education and leadership categories from the inspection framework, so I hope to bring some of this knowledge and experience for the benefit of NIS.

This is an unusual start time of the academic year and there have been various visa and covid related delays which extended the process of my arrival beyond anyone's control, but I am delighted to be here and looking forward to the new challenges. I will have a lot to catch up on, including getting to know the community, but I am looking forward to making your acquaintance. I believe in developing strong community relations and I am acutely aware of the need for parental support and involvement in the education process, if your children are going to be successful learners.

Online learning perhaps presents the greatest challenges for our youngest learners and the support which families have provided to date with this is greatly appreciated. I will continue to look for ways to develop this provision and support you with learning from home, whilst regulations continue to require distance learning to be in place.

I look forward to getting to know everyone and continuing to develop a positive learning environment which is built on trust, support and collaboration.

Yours faithfully,

Richard McMahon

Executive Principal

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